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# Statement of Mike Mansfield - Recess at Geneva

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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August 6, 1959

STATEMENT OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD (D. MONTANA)

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RECESS AT GENEVA

Mr. President:

The foreign ministers completed their work at Geneva yesterday. I understand that these meetings, which have been in progress since last May, have gone into recess rather than into actual adjournment.

Whatever the precise form of the termination, it is apparent that the search for reasonable agreement between the Soviet Union and the Western nations is now moving into other channels. It would be easy to pass off the Geneva Conference of foreign ministers as a futile, time-consuming exercise leading nowhere. In my opinion that would be an erroneous interpretation, a serious underestimation of its importance. I think it is entirely reasonable to say that we might well be, at the present time, in the midst of another costly Berlin blockade or harassment had this Conference not been held. True, we still have to face that possibility for the future. For the moment at least, the Geneva Conference has put off the crisis and paved the way for a further search for agreement.

Without the Geneva Conference, moreover, it is also reasonable to say that there would have not been a trip by the Vice President to Moscow or certainly not a trip as constructive



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and useful as his has proved to be. Nor would there have been, in any likelihood, the coming exchange of visits between the President and Mr. Khrushchev.

So, let me repeat, it is in my opinion, a smug and carping injustice to depreciate the efforts put forth by the Secretary of State at Geneva and, indeed, other ministers at that meeting. Mr. Herter did the spadework, so to speak, which had to be done if there is to be any lasting constructive results from the Vice President's recent mission and the impending Eisenhower-Khrushchev exchanges.

The Secretary of State set forth at Geneva a fresh and cogent expression of United States policy with respect to Germany. It was an expression which made clear for the first time that there exists a basis for reasonable agreement in our policy, derived from the realities of the situation with which we must live in 1959. I would hope that Mr. Khrushchev, when he confers with President Eisenhower, will see that such is the case, as his foreign minister at Geneva apparently did not. There may be at least some ground for this expectation because Mr. Khrushchev characterized as "sober and sensible" nine essentials of policy on Germany and a divided Europe which I listed in a speech on February 12. And the proposals put forth by Mr. Herter at Geneva do not differ, in great degree, from these nine points.

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One would hope that geometry in the Soviet Union is the same as in the United States and that the theorem applies that "things equal to the same thing are equal to each other."

Let me recall in summary form at this point these nine suggested essentials of policy, as they were stated on February 12th and developed in subsequent speeches.

(1) Stand fast in Berlin, not as a slogan, not as an end in itself but as the basis for a Western initiative for peace in Europe.

(2) Call upon the German leaders of the East and West Berlin communities to begin serious negotiations for unifying the public services and municipal government of that city.

(3) Enlist the conciliatory services of the Secretary-General of the United Nations in the effort to bring about the interim unification and neutralization, not just of West Berlin but of all Berlin; guarantee by U.N. or other international means the free use of the routes of access to the entire city until such time as it became once again the capital of a unified Germany.

(4) If this or a similar approach to interim unification and neutralization of all Berlin is not obtained, then continue the Western presence in West Berlin, whether or not the Russians chose to leave the other sector of the city.

(5) If forced to maintain the Western presence in West Berlin in such circumstances, however, consider seriously withdrawing the garrisons of French, British and American forces from the city and replacing them with West Germans supported by NATO guarantees.



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(6) Call upon the Germans in authority in West and East Germany to talk, to talk a great deal on the whole range of problems involved in harmonizing the political, economic and military systems of the two zones as an essential preliminary step to the unification of Germany.

(7) Call upon the East German communists and the Russians to permit the exercise, without the threat of terror, of basic political freedoms in the Eastern zone, as a preliminary to reunification.

(8) Seek agreements between the Soviet Union and the Western allies to guarantee for a period of years the kind of unified Germany which might emerge from German discussions and see to it that a reunited Germany is neither subjected to military pressures by its neighbors or becomes a source of aggressive military pressure on them.

(9) To that end consider agreements for the control and limitation of armaments in Germany and Central Europe along the lines of the Eden Plan, the Rapacki Plan and similar plans, predicated on satisfactory agreements being reached at the Geneva Conferences on the Prevention of Surprise Attacks and the Suspension of Nuclear Testing.

Mr. President, when these proposals were advanced initially there was a great deal of comment on them both at home and abroad. Some of it was critical and some of the criticism was little short of an expression of shocked disbelief. But since

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that time, we have, in fact, witnessed an evolution of United States and Western policy with respect to Germany in the direction of these proposals.

This nation went into the present Geneva Conference with a general approach which represented a sharp modification of the policies to which we had clung for years. The new approach has made it evident that while we would stand fast in Berlin, we would do so not as an end in itself, but as the basis for moving towards a reasonable settlement of basic Berlin, German and European problems. Beyond standing fast, we have suggested at Geneva specific plans for bringing about negotiations for the reunification of the public services and municipal government of that city. We have called for a phased reunification of all Germany based upon extensive contact and extensive talk on the part of the German authorities of the East and West prior to free, all-German elections. We have sought the restoration of the right of open political activity for all Germans, free of terror and legal reprisals, in both zones. We have expressed our willingness to seek agreements between the Soviet Union and the Western nations to guarantee a unified Germany and its neighbors against aggression. We have noted our willingness to consider limiting the level of armaments in both parts of Germany and a reduction in foreign forces in that country--a position which seems to me to encompass the basic philosophy of the Eden and Rapacki Plans.



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In more recent weeks, moreover, there have been indications that the Western nations are prepared to consider bringing the United Nations Secretary General into the situation at Berlin and we have also given assurances that we are willing to refrain from arming our forces in Berlin with non-conventional weapons and that we are ready to limit our forces in that city if it will help to achieve agreement. In short, Mr. President, on the eight points of the nine essentials--and only eight are applicable at this time--there have been significant changes of direction or expression in United States foreign policy in an effort to bring about a thaw, to end the rigidity.

So I repeat, Mr. President, a basis for reasonable agreement has been set forth at Geneva by the Western nations. That had needed doing for a long time. It has now been done, in a highly effective manner by the Secretary of State. From this achievement has flowed the highly successful mission of the Vice President to Russia and Poland. From it, too, is derived such hope as may be reposed in the coming Eisenhower-Khrushchev meetings. The Secretary of State and his staff have performed a distinguished public service at Geneva. I do not think that the Senate should lose sight of it in the dazzling new developments which are now taking place.